

Maine Farmer

The condition of the Maine State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, located at Orono, is a matter that concerns the whole people of the State, since for several years it has been fully recognized one of our public institutions. Whether it would have been better at the outset to have given the funds which went to establish this institution to some other than the existing Colleges, on condition that such College should establish a department of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, is no longer a question for discussion, since it was exhaustively discussed at the time the Legislature collectively decided to establish this institution, and to create a separate institution, to be under the control and management of the State, through a board of trustees appointed by the Governor and Council. The principles upon which the institution was founded are well defined, and when the rules and regulations of the institution are promulgated and promulgated, there was a virtual contract between the State on the one hand and such students as might attend the institution on the other which contract is binding.

The State offered free tuition to all who were desirous of attending the institution. It also promised that diligent students and others who might desire to labor upon the farm, at a fair compensation. In addition to studies pursued in the institutions, there was to be instruction in agriculture, and the teaching of agriculture was also in mechanics. There were not to be merely theoretical teachers, but were to be practically illustrated upon the farm and the shops. Having established the college upon this basis, the State was and is bound to furnish the means or what is necessary to carry out the action of the Legislature, for carrying their own established rules and regulations into effect, and to continue to furnish them until due notice has been given of the proposed repeal of the laws establishing the college and the rules governing it, and until they are changed. By the action of the Legislature, the State has fairly contracted, and pledges, and appropriations have been made to meet the deficiencies, but the Legislature refused to appropriate a dollar. They did pass a bill giving management of the college the right to charge tuition of the students, but this could not be done without a breach of the contract, so far as the students are concerned. In attendance were concerned, and we glad to know that the unjust State was not been enforced by the trustees.

The change proposed by this Legislature is subversive of the whole plan of the institution, and is a gross violation of our judgment. It will ruin it. Those who pay the increased expense will be taken away, and those who have the means to pay will prefer to go to some older and well-entrenched institution. It is equally certain that the institution cannot be successful in carrying out the income of the invested funds. It is not possible to complain of the manner in which the land was from which these funds arose, was disposed of, except to show that the mismanagement, if mismanagement there was, was entirely by the State and not by the management of the college, and that the State is not responsible for the litigation to supply any deficiency which may arise in the proper management of the institution. Had the lands which were donated by the general government been disposed of to the best advantage, the income would have been sufficient for all the purposes of the institution. The Legislature passed an act authorizing the Governor and Council to dispose of them, and they sold at a very low price, the last instrument much against the judgment of the trustees. One State which had but more than half the land that Maine did, was able to realize more than the amount.

We understand that the regular income of the college funds, is about eight hundred dollars, a sum which any person of ordinary apprehension can see, is insufficient for conducting the institution. The large farm buildings, including necessary repairs, and the cost of a great violation of the contract was not intended to be carried out of profit, and hence it has never been a source of income. When purchased, it was sold out and the farm buildings were in a state of disrepair. Much in the way of improvement has been done, and the farm is now in a state of repair. It is not possible to have no better than any farmer having so much cultivated land, should have. The State was intended first as an experiment station where experiments might be tried and results obtained which might be of use to the farmers of the State. Second, to give the students an opportunity to obtain a practical knowledge of agriculture, and aid them in paying their expenses. Experiment agriculture is not likely to be very remunerative, as every farmer knows, and the students do not constitute the most profitable of help. But this is the nearest to the nearest to paying the expenses that it is possible, and the deficiency if any, will be small.

Much has appeared in these columns concerning the State College since it was founded, but we visited the institution recently for the first time, and a brief record of our impressions may not be entirely void of interest. It was founded in the early part of the season, the college and its surroundings would have appeared more attractive, but the November proved to be pleasant, and the occasion of the whole, was very enjoyable. We were cordially greeted by President Penobscot, and the country bordering the river can be seen for most of the distance between Stillwater and Orono, and the college buildings are in a state of repair.

Several buildings belonging to the institution are in a state of repair.

President Fernald kindly arranged the recitations so that we could spend a half hour with most of the classes. It being near the close of the term, the classes were reviewing, and the work in the engineering department, and also the vice work in the State Normal School. The session of the afternoon was attended by the class in Mental and Moral Science, before President Fernald, who also heard the class in trigonometry. These classes appeared admirably, indicating good progress and thorough instruction. We next attended the lecture by Prof. A. H. Church on the subject of interference in the draft, between the wheel and the swing plow, &c. Prof. Jordan is a graduate of the college and Professor of Agriculture, and is a very promising teacher. His articles in our columns have rendered his name familiar to our readers. Next we heard the class in chemistry before Prof. A. H. Church. The session of the morning was devoted to the formation of the soils from the disintegration of different rocks, and was very interesting. The Professor is of French extraction and obtained his education largely in Europe. We then heard a lecture by Mr. C. H. Fernald, Professor of Natural History, on the subject of the evolution of the world very intelligently discussed and explained. Prof. Fernald is an enthusiastic naturalist, and the collections he has made for the use of the college, are extensive and valuable. The exercises of the class closed in season for us to hear the last half of a lecture by Prof. A. H. Church, Principal of the Normal School at Castine, on the subject of teaching. Nearly all the classes were present at this exercise as most of the students propose to teach during the vacation. The lecture was practical and to the point, and was listened to with marked attention. It was especially in this kind of are of great value, especially to the students who intend to teach in this school. Prof. Pike is instructor in engineering. Prof. Hamlin in drawing and field engineering, and Prof. Rogers in modern languages and military science. The last two are graduates of the college.

The college faculty is made up of earnest men, some in middle life, but most of them young, and each thoroughly devoted to his chosen branch of study. The instruction given is eminently practical and calculated to prepare the student for the active duties of life, be his chosen profession or calling. The faculty are graduates of the highest scholar, has had long experience in teaching, and has been connected with the college from its commencement. He is now in the prime and vigor of life, and is willing and anxious to devote his entire energies to the college. But to make his labors more effective, he has secured a number of funds.

Neither should he be compelled to come before the Legislature every year and urge upon the State the necessity of its sustaining its own offspring. There should be no extravagance allowed in its management. Every expenditure should be carefully scrutinized by the Legislature, and the original plan, it should have. The faculty should have a fair compensation for their labor and no more. The farm should now not only be self-sustaining, but should be a source of some profit. The buildings should be kept in good repair, and the walks, drives and grounds should be kept in a rich state of repair, should not be allowed to deteriorate, and lastly, faith should be kept with the students. The want of the small appropriation asked for last winter, and which the Legislature so perceptibly refused, has been seriously felt during the whole year, and in consequence, many of the students have been deprived of the instruction required to be done.

The Maine State College was established for the benefit of the farmers and mechanics of the State, and shall it be given up or allowed to die from starvation, before it has had a fair trial? It is for the farmers and mechanics of the State, and shall it have a majority in the Legislature, and have it in their power to grant the needed support or withhold it. They should act deliberately and upon their own judgment, and not be led by demagogues who would sacrifice the dearest interests of the State to the gratification of their personal ambition. The knowledge of both the science and practice of agriculture, and the mature deliberation, the farmers and mechanics of the State come to the conclusion that they do not need nor want such an institution, while we should entirely disagree with their decision, we would advise them to wind it up in the shortest possible way, and not permit it to be a finger on the scale of the State.

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Communications.

For the Maine Farmer.

"Are our Barn Cellars Doing us Injury?"

The above query is raised by a correspondent of the FARMER in your last issue. Evidently he had in mind the condition in which manure is sometimes found when stored in a barn cellar. We all know that manure from the stock dropped into a cellar and then trodden down into a solid mass, and all barn manure thus incidentally kept upon it, remains precisely in that crude, green state for an indefinite time. It is not, however, so much more or less with straw and other litter used around the stock; and this, even, will

HOCKSIN.

remain entirely unchanged. I have known of several cases, where farmers had built new barns with cellars under them, when they were sadly disappointed in the effect, or rather lack of effect of such manure taken directly from the cellars and applied to the land. They actually came to the conclusion that the cellar was working an injury, for their manure they said "was good for anything." They could not but little benefit from it. They had been using manures from unsilted yards and heaps where the atmospheric influence had partially decomposed it, and reacted promptly, and the plants felt its influence at once." If they were not in the habit of studying out the reasons for what they saw, they would have followed the manure to the conclusion that the cellar was working them injury. But the trouble was not with their cellars, but with their management.

I believe it is an accepted fact, unquestioned by all intelligent farmers who have given the matter attention, that manure properly housed is far more valuable than when left in open yards. It should be well established that a cellar is the most economical arrangement for the purpose, because it renders the manure more valuable, because manure is housed in a cellar that it must be in that crude and insoluble condition that renders it comparatively valueless. Green manure is not plant food. Decomposition must take place before any considerable portion of the plant food in the manure is made available to the plants. The barn cellar is the place for this. But instead of putting hogs or other animals upon this manure, and thus forcing it to decompose, it is allowed to lay light so that at least partial decomposition shall take place, before it is applied to the plants. When saving material is used to take up the liquid manure, and mingled with the solids, and the manure allowed to remain in a cellar, it is not, I believe no one will have occasion to complain that his manure from the cellar is applied to the plants in a crude state. His barn cellar is "doing him injury."

Z. A. G.

For the Maine Farmer.

Large vs. Small Potatoes.

The question "Shall we use large or small potatoes for seed is again having its annual discussion among the agriculturists. The advocates of the large come forward with carefully conducted experiments going to show that not only large but small potatoes should be used. In the case of the small potatoes the "running out" of the crop in two or three seasons. Then the opponents of the large potatoes have been carefully conducted experiments proving that the size is immaterial and advocate the planting of one tract and account of its being of less value and of the much larger breadth of land planted per bushel. It seems that the potatoes that are raised in the State are of many other questions in Agricultural Science should have been finally decided by the State Agricultural Experiment Station long time ago. I venture the following: reasoning from observation and experience to the fact that the small potatoes under unfavorable circumstances, will grow a thrifty stalk on which will grow seed, every year. Then the large potatoes, on the large growth on account of the development of the seed but will possess a constitution and vigor and a power to transmit to their progeny the same qualities possessed by a barren plant tuber. While the skillful breeders of the Durhams the Jerseys and the Herefords have succeeded in improving the desirable qualities of their several breeds, it would seem unfortunate that the large stalk potatoes, which are the staple of the Jackson's and the Early Rose should be doomed to degenerate and finally disappear from the soil of the State so early so. When our cultivators realize the importance of keeping our potato seed up to its highest standard, they will not be without the patient investigation and experiment that its importance demands. I am sure that the reward will not be withheld for a fruitful field of investigation for our Agricultural Colleges.

Potatoes that set by the middle of June, will then ripen forward by September 20th. Some varieties earlier. Sometimes when a heavy rain follows a dry June, or a high wind, the temperature of the soil, or the electrical state of the atmosphere these may cause another set of tubers to make their appearance, and of the same size will be in favor of small seed, for I believe a potato not quite ripe will produce a better set than one that is more or less ripe. The vitality of the potato if planted the following year. For a series of years we have had a blight, but the small ones are the only ones that will set in August, stopping all growth. While there may be some satisfaction in seeing the potatoes that are set in the fall, and which are growing much less every year and when this state of affairs changes I think we should be obliged to send to more favorable sections for seed. I think this one great cause of the potato rot of the present season. The small potatoes are much the most valuable of any of our Agricultural exports from Maine, and any experiments to sound theories advocating the use of the large potatoes.

North Kennebec.

For the Maine Farmer.

Washington County.

Would a reporter of the doings of some of the "Way down east" farmers be of interest? If so, I will try and make a brief report. I have been unable to ascertain anything of a definite nature as regards the

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